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TO: Local Workforce Investment Board Chairs
Local Workforce Investment Area Directors

RE: Adult Education and Literacy Providers

The California Workforce Investment Board (State Board) shares the enthusiasm of the California Department of Education (CDE) in announcing the award of Workforce Investment Act Title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (WIA Title II) funds to adult education and literacy providers in your community. The State Board views these providers' educational assessments and literacy classes for One-Stop participants and the general public as vital components of California's efforts to upgrade the skill levels of our state's workforce. Improving those skills will both enhance our workers' quality of life and ensure that our industries have the effective, well-trained workforce necessary to the growth and sustainability of California's economy.

Last July, testifying before the California Assembly's Select Committee on Adult Education, Dr. Deborah Reed of the Public Policy Institute of California (and member of the State Board's Council of Economic Advisors) said:

"Improving educational attainment is more important today than in past decades because the earnings of low-educated workers have eroded. Improving the education and skills of low-educated workers can help to reverse the trend in falling wages of low-earning workers, reduce income inequality, lower wage gaps between racial and ethnic groups, reduce poverty, and improve child well-being."

A priority concern in the partnership between the State Board and the CDE has been to ensure the exchange of information on workforce and educational services and needs. Toward this end, a briefing on adult and vocational educational offerings as they relate to One-Stop Centers was conducted at the State Board's meeting on November 19, 2003. This information will be used to stimulate ongoing work with both One-Stop and adult education staff, and to identify attributes of successful Title II and One-Stop partnerships. On December 2, 2003, the Adult

Education Office also provided technical assistance to adult education and literacy providers on the relationship of Title II to the One-Stop system, with the goal of improving and increasing services to participants. The Adult Education Office conducted a One-Stop survey as well, and looks forward to sharing its findings with the workforce development community.

The State Board recommends that Local Workforce Investment Boards meet with the WIA Title II funded agencies in their areas to identify the literacy problems faced by job seekers and affecting employers. By developing joint “plans of action,” Local Boards can better design collaborative partnerships that will help their communities and maximize the resources of both One-Stop and WIA Title II adult education or literacy providers.

WIA Title II agencies are experts in helping participants with low levels of literacy (those with less than high school educations or who do not communicate effectively in English). The State Board is enthusiastic about the potential benefits for California’s businesses and workers from the collaboration of WIA Title II agencies and workforce development community providers.

Sincerely,

LAWRENCE B. GOTLIEB, Chair
California Workforce Investment Board